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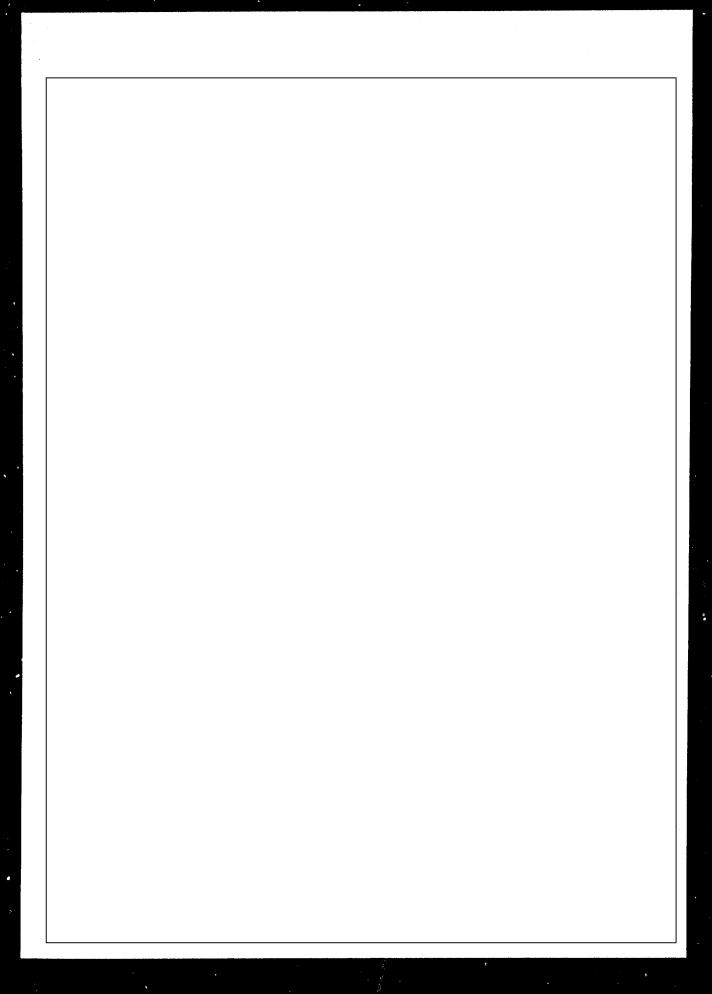
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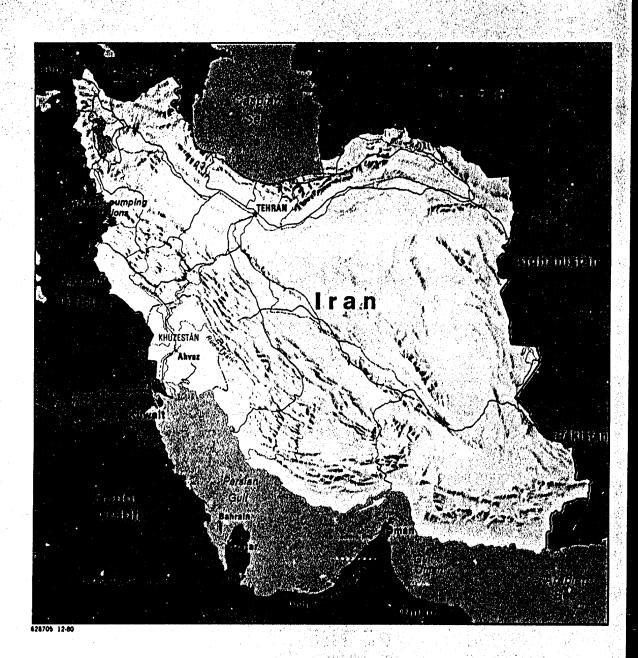
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Mounting casualties and economic dislocations are producing an atmosphere of malaise in Iraq. To minimize the impact of the war on civilians, Baghdad's strategy has been to ensure a large supply of consumer goods, reopen schools, resume work by foreign contractors, and reactivate building projects. Recently, however, this strategy has been disrupted. The government was forced on Saturday to institute a gas-rationing system for private automobiles. Baghdad also suffers daily 12-to-14-hour cuts in electricity because Iranian air attacks have damaged power plants; several plants either are not functioning or are producing at well below normal levels. Shortages of natural gas also apparently have developed in several major cities. declining morale is arricting the military as well. Iraqi troops occupy an essentially static front, facing cold and wet winter weather. Although the regime probably does not now face a
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serious domestic threat, problems are likely to increase pressures on Baghdad to find a way to end the war.
On Saturday, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz criticized Iran for rejecting all mediation offers.
Military Developments
Bad weather has hampered Iranian and Iraqi air operations.
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